AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of identifying relevant experts using a search request from a user, comprising:

maintaining an updateable and searchable database of expert profiles, wherein the profiles include attributes of a particular expert, and wherein one of the attributes is the expert's real-time availability;

receiving a search request from the user; and

applying a weight designated by the user to the attributes of a desired expert.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

searching the database using the search request; and

displaying a list of ranked experts, wherein each expert's position in the ranked list is determined by a ranking algorithm wherein said ranking algorithm uses the weights of each attribute and is based on both static attributes and dynamic attributes.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the database automatically updates the expert's availability.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the attribute is the expert's area of knowledge.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the attribute is the expert's available time until a next assignment.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the attribute is the expert's proximity to the user.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the attribute is the expert's available contact method.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the attribute is the expert's travel speed.

10. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the user is automatically connected to a selected expert by interfacing with the expert's name as it appears on the displayed list.

11. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein a menu appears with available contact mediums when an expert is selected.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the contact medium is email and when selected a dialog box appears for the user to prepare and send an email to the expert.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the contact medium is telephone and when selected the expert's telephone number is displayed.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

selecting a messaging communication mode by which the user contacts a selected expert.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the profile is able to be created by the expert.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the profile is able to be updated by the expert.

17. (Previously Presented) A system for searching for experts, comprising:

a searchable and updateable database of expert information, wherein said database comprises a plurality of expert profiles, each of said profiles including data relating to one or more static and dynamic attributes of a particular expert;

a user interface for allowing users to identify desired characteristics of a desired expert, wherein the user interface also allows users to assign weights to one or more of the desired characteristics;

a processor for:

searching said database using said desired characteristics, and

generating a list of ranked experts; and

a display for displaying said ranked list, wherein each expert's position in the list is determined by a ranking algorithm based on said static attributes and said dynamic attributes.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 17 further comprising:

a work order system for processing and storing data related to an expert's work assignments wherein said work order system communicates said work assignment data with said searchable and updateable database.

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18 wherein said work assignment data comprises one or more of:

data related to an estimated time of arrival of an expert; and

data related to an estimated completion time for an expert to complete a work assignment.

20. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 17 wherein said ranking algorithm further ranks said list of experts according to:

a correlation between each expert's expert profile and the user's desired expert characteristics; and

said-weights that the user has assigned to certain characteristics.

21. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein a user interfaces with the database via a remote wireless or wireline Internet connection.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18 further comprising:

a location tracking information system for generating data related to the expert's location wherein said work order system communicates said location data with said searchable and updateable database.

23 (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22 wherein said location data comprises one or more of:

data that defines a user's location in relation to an expert's location; and

data that defines an expert's fixed location.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 23 wherein said location tracking information system is a Global Positioning System (GPS).